

WHAT THE PRESIDENT WILL DO AT PANAMA

Novel Incidents That Will Mark His Trip and How
He Will Be Entertained.

Determined to See For Himself What Work Has Actually Been Done on the Great Canal.

Mr. Roosevelt, Clad In a Mackintosh and Rubber Boots, Will Thoroughly

Explore the Famous Culebra Cut—Extraordinary Precaution to

Guard Presidential Party From Yellow Fever—Will

Be In Touch With Washington by
Wireless Telegraphy.

By ROBERTUS LOVE.

THERE is nothing suggesting "the swing around the circle" in President Roosevelt's approaching visit to Panama. It is merely a matter of public business. The United States is digging the Panama canal. As president of the United States Mr. Roosevelt is general overseer of the job. It is a big job, and the boss is going down there to see how the work is getting along. Any man in his position would be expected to do the same thing, but in the case of Roosevelt the expectation is a foregone conclusion. A considerable section of the American public has been wondering how the president has managed to keep away from Panama thus long. He is the sort of man who wants to see things for himself when a large measure of the responsibility is his.

Mr. Roosevelt's readiness to find out things for himself may be illustrated by an anecdote about another man.

During the civil war General Joe Wheeler, Confederate cavalry leader, stood surrounded by his staff when an engagement was imminent. Not far in advance was a little hill crowned by a clump of bushes. General Wheeler scanned the hill suspiciously through his field glasses, and other officers did the same.

"I wonder if there is a masked battery on that hill," said one of the officers.

"I'll see," replied Wheeler, mounting his horse and galloping forward. Before he reached the foot of the rise there was a big puff of smoke and the roar of a cannon, while the ball came

hand, actually welcoming the hardships of a trip through the canal zone. The president likes exercise, and he is very likely to get plenty of it during his inspection of the digging operations.

Somewhere down there the proper officials have got ready a pair of hip high rubber boots of the presidential number and a long rubber coat for Rooseveltian occupancy. Probably a rubber hat is included in this outfit, in which the president will go through the great Culebra cut, personally inspecting the work already done and in progress.

The Culebra cut is the narrowest part of the canal because it is the deepest. At that point rises the backbone of the isthmus or what may be called the Siamese twin ligament that connects North and South America. Our engineers are simply cutting through this great backbone, which is partly stone and partly earth, and down in the present channel is altogether mud. The mud is of a sticky variety and exceedingly wet in places. Through this the president will plow his way clad in rubber, and, to employ a slang term, there is no doubt that he will do a great deal of rubbering on this tour of inspection.

The great steam shovels, which fill a big cut with only three bites of mud, will attract his attention, along with many other mechanical devices specially patterned to undertake the Herculean tasks presented. The American laborers who have gone down there to help and the negroes and Spanish natives of Panama and of the West In-



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PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT.

whizzing past. He wheeled and rode back to his staff.

"Yes, there is," he said.

Nobody expects President Roosevelt to find any sort of masked batteries in the canal zone notwithstanding the hostile criticism of the management of the work that comes from some quarters. But the Panama canal in the future will be associated with Roosevelt's name and administration, and none of us can quarrel with the president for his desire and determination to dispense with hesitations for the time being and get some prima facie evidence, though it is going to take him out of the United States.

No other president of the United States has visited a foreign country during his term of office. Even in this instance the foreign visit will be only incidental, for during much of his four days in Panama the president will be actually on United States soil. The canal zone, ten miles wide, belongs in perpetuity to the United States. As a matter of courtesy Mr. Roosevelt will visit President Amador of the republic of Panama and will touch at several points that are on foreign territory. But even in this he will be attending to business. Still, it is something new for a president of the United States to get out of his own country, but then we have come to expect the present incumbent to do new things.

Likely to Get Plenty of Exercise.

Heretofore there has been no occasion for the chief executive to set foot on foreign soil. Now that the occasion has arisen, it is a matter of public congratulation that the man in the White House is a strenuous individual and can go to Panama without fear of the Yellow Jack mosquito or the malarial microbe, but, on the other

dies who are assisting Uncle Sam in this mighty undertaking will see the rubbered and rubbering president of the greatest nation in the world picking and plowing his way through the rubbish and the muck, closely inspecting a sort of muck raking which even he must approve heartily.

Laborious, but Interesting.

But this picture of the president wading in the mud at the bottom of the Culebra cut and climbing the slippery slopes will be really nothing new for Mr. Roosevelt, except as to location and occasion. He is more or less accustomed to that sort of thing. He has hunted bear in swamps and canyons and has sought mountain lions on perilous heights, clad in costumes that made him look like the ordinary sportsman out for a good time, and upon those expeditions of strenuous adventure he no doubt had a good time, but not a whit more "bully" than he will find the laborious but interesting trip through the partly dug canal.

It is only those who have been privileged to see Mr. Roosevelt rigged out in an old hat and boots, leggings and rough clothes who know how vastly he enjoys such a thing. To the laborers in the Panama ditch, who have been wont to imagine the rulers of great nations as always dressed in their Sunday clothes, the sudden appearance of the rubber clad stout man in eyeglasses will be somewhat startling. It is not to be doubted that for many years to come there will be a number of men whose chief claim to glory will lie in saying to their families and associates:

"I was at work in the Panama canal when the president of the United States came through, and he stopped and talked to me, shook hands and asked me if my health was good and if I got enough to eat."

And, who knows, perhaps the president will insist upon eating a meal with the workmen, as he did with the sailors on the battleship Missouri not long ago. He has stated already that he intends to pay for his own meals on the voyage to Panama, and therefore he must be permitted to eat what he pleases, unless Surgeon General Rixey, his physician, who is going along, should happen to object too strongly.

Formidable Mosquito Barricade.

There is practically no danger that the president will be exposed to any climatic perils in Panama. The Hotel Tivoli, which is to be his stopping place in the capital of the little republic, will be impervious to the stegomyia, otherwise the lady mosquito, which transmits yellow fever from person to person in two bites. We are told that this entire hotel "will be inclosed in mosquito netting to prevent mosquitoes which spread the yellow fever germ from stinging the president or the members of his party." Doubtless if any mosquitoes do try to get into the Tivoli they will carry to their dying day the recollection of the most formidable mosquito barricade in the history of the insect.

But thanks to the good work of Governor Magoon, now of Cuba, and Colonel W. C. Gorgas, chief sanitary officer of the canal zone, the sanitary condition of the zone and of the city of Panama as well has been so greatly improved that the stegomyia peril is said to be practically a memory.

President Roosevelt goes to Panama aboard the most powerful battleship in our navy. The Louisiana, which was launched but a few months ago, is of 17,000 tons displacement, nearly equal to the boasted British Dreadnought and in armament and equipment equal to any sea fighter afloat. Considering the extra touches added to the Louisiana's interior in preparation for the president's voyage, this big bulldog of the seas is a very tidy craft for a comfortable ride of 1,788 miles and back.

The presidential quarters are separated by a temporary bulkhead from the rest of the ship. Seven state-rooms and three bathrooms are set aside for President and Mrs. Roosevelt. Miss Ethel Roosevelt, Dr. Rixey, Assistant Secretary M. C. Latta and Lieutenant Frank T. Evans, the president's aid. The large cabin intended for the flag officer is made over into a dining and reception room. The chief of staff's cabin is prepared for a sitting room, while the space around the after turret, under the noses of the big twelve inch guns, is intended for a general sitting room, being fitted with cozy chairs and lounges. Captain Conden, commander of the ship, is to occupy during the voyage the emergency cabin on the bridge.

To Take a Sail on a Casco.

This is a very different sort of craft

from the one that is to carry the president through a part of the canal zone. It is arranged for him to take a sail aboard one of the native built cascos. This is a flatboat, very substantially constructed in primitive fashion, with a rude sail and a still ruder rudder. It is an open boat, without frills. As it moves awkwardly over the waters of the lake that will form a portion of the great canal the sensation will be quite different from that produced by the battleship Louisiana speeding smoothly and swiftly through leagues of white sea foam, a very modern and up to date armed and armored castle not set upon a crag, but endowed with the liberty of the sea and carrying within its own cavernous interior the power of locomotion.

From the superb battleship to the funny little casco is truly quite a change, but that is just the sort of thing that President Roosevelt considers de-lightful. Ten to one if you should ask him after his return to Washington what part of the trip he most enjoyed he will say:

"Why, the ride on that Panama flatboat. That was just bully!"

Will Be Escorted by Young Panamanians.

Another thing that is bound to please the president beyond measure is the escort of a hundred young Panamanians mounted, who, according to the programme as announced, are to accompany him on his drive about the city of Panama. The rough rider instinct in the president's soul will come to the surface again at this time, and he may long for a chance to give these awkward young Latin-Americans some lessons modeled after the teachings of the late Buckey O'Neil and other plainsmen who fought with him at San Juan.

Some timid spirits, always looking for trouble, have grown bold enough to ask who will be the president of the United States while Theodore Roosevelt is gone. The answer is not

far to seek. Theodore Roosevelt will be the president. While he will pass out of United States territory when he crosses the three mile limit, he will still stand upon the very substantial deck of a United States battleship, aboard of which this government is always sovereign. Moreover, we are given to understand that the wireless telegraph will be available at all times and that Lieutenant Evans, son of "Fighting Bob," will officially transmit to Secretary Loch at Washington such executive orders as the president may find it necessary to promulgate, if any. Our little family of \$10,000,000 can get along very well for a few days, anyhow, with Father Roosevelt away attending to family affairs.

It is quite interesting and highly gratifying to reflect, by the way, that but for the recent invention of wireless telegraphy a president who really wanted to get away from the cares of state altogether and lose himself for a time could desert us at will. There may be nothing new under the sun, but the wireless president seems to contradict the ancient wisdom of Solomon.

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